the way of permanently establishing these people as peasant cultivators. In olden times these men were attached to the land as field labourers cared for by the landlords who provided for them in kind. When land is now registered in their names, they find it difficult to realise that it is their own property and it takes very little inducement for them to part with it for what in their eyes is a very large sum of money. It has therefore been laid down that land so registered is inalienable without the previous sanction of the Government and resumptions because of alienation have been necessary. Leaders of these communities have suggested to me that outright registration with ownership rights may be replaced by a system of long-term leaseholds. This suggestion is being examined.

Salt.

6. In my address last year I expressed a hope that the whole of the salt consumed in the State might be produced in the State. In 1103, the total amount of salt consumed in the State was 1,181,124 maunds, roughly twenty-one pounds per head of the present estimated population. Home-manufactured salt rose from 678,380 maunds in 1102 to 987,515 maunds in 1103, the yield per acre of salt pans within the State increasing from 1,934 maunds to 2,993 maunds. This increase both in yield per acre and in total production was due to a partial failure of the monsoon in South Travancore resulting in more dry days when evaporation was possible. Thus, what was an unfavourable season for agriculture was a favourable season for salt manufacture.

Trade.

7. As I have just said, cultivation in South Travancore more particularly paddy cultivation, suffered through a shortage of rain ; and larger imports of paddy and rice from outside became necessary. In other respects, trade conditions were generally favourable. The total value of external trade which was Rs. 16·21 crores in 1101 rose to Rs. 17·57 crores in 1102 and reached Rs. 20·08 crores in 1103. The percentage of exports to the total external trade was 63 in 1101 ; it rose to 65 in 1102, and fell to 59 in 1103. The percentage of imports to the total external trade was 37 in 1101, 35 in 1102 and rose sharply to 41 in 1103. Seaborne trade represented 31 per cent of the total external trade. 39 per cent of the trade was carried by backwater, 20 per cent by road and 10 per cent by railway. The distribution of imports in value among the population according to the census of 1921 was Rs. 20·6 per head and of exports Rs 29·5 per head. The balance of trade in favour of the State was thus Rs. 8·9 per head. On the present estimated population of 4,400,000, these figures would respectively be Rs. 18·7, Rs. 26·8 and Rs. 8·1. The value of exports of the produce of the cocoanut palm, both raw and manufactured, amounted in 1102 to Rs. 387 lakhs and in 1103 to Rs. 369 lakhs. The pepper exported fell from 43,184 candies* in 1102 to 34,124 candies in 1103 ; but although there was this decrease in quantity,

* Candy = 500 lbs.

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mainly due to a smaller production, the value of the pepper exported rose from Rs. 132 lakhs to Rs. 166 lakhs. The producer thus obtained a much better price in 1103 than in 1102 and this was due in large measure to the stimulus given to the trade by direct American buying at Alleppey. The tea exported from Travancore rose from 26,311,860 pounds to the value of Rs. 260 lakhs in 1102 to 31,186,423 pounds to the value of Rs. 309 lakhs in 1103. The rubber exported rose from 7,656,306 lbs. in 1102 to 7,779,844 lbs. in 1103. But the value fell from Rs. 91 lakhs to Rs. 83 lakhs. The most remarkable variation was in the quantity and value of paddy and rice imported. In 1102, the quantity of paddy was 1,235,548 cwts. to the value of Rs. 67·74 lakhs and of rice 1,300,359 cwts. to the value of Rs. 131 lakhs. In 1103 the figures were, paddy 1,41,886 cwts. to the value of Rs 81·99 lakhs, and rice 2,592,667 cwts. to the value of Rs. 234 lakhs. You will thus see that Travancore imported in 1103 this staple food grain to the value of Rs. 316 lakhs as against Rs. 199 lakhs in 1102. There are some interesting lessons to be learned from these figures. As she is circumstanced today, Travancore can provide herself with her full requirements of food in the shape of rice out of the proceeds of the surplus produce of the cocoanut palm, of pepper, ginger, cardamoms, etc. But whether this fortunate situation will continue for any length of time is a question which will call for anxious consideration in the not too remote future. After allowing for the rice purchased from abroad, which works out to Rs. 7 per head of population per annum, the balance of trade in her favour, on totals of visible exports and imports, is at present Rs. 8·9 per head of population. The position is many sided. One is the lessening of the burden of imported food by increasing food production within the State. The total area at present under paddy cultivation is about 673,000 acres. I doubt very much whether this area can be increased substantially. There is a noticeable tendency already for the cultivator to turn his paddy lands over to other forms of cultivation. Intensified and larger production may help to some extent. The other staple food produced is tapioca. The area under tapioca is at present about 500,000 acres and it is steadily increasing. But this form of food will probably never be readily accepted as their staple food by a large part of the population. There is a strong preference for rice and there has been a striking indication of this quite recently when with the substantial fall in the price of imported Burma and Saigon rice the price of tapioca fell rapidly on a decreased demand and an increased supply. It is therefore a reasonable inference to draw that if the population of Travancore continues to increase at its present rate of 16 per cent per decennium the import of rice will be so great in a generation or two that it will sooner or later greatly diminish or even extinguish the balance of trade now in favour of the country and thereby affect the economic condition of the people. Other safeguards are to increase surplus production for export and to develop industries, so that a favourable balance of trade, an important index of prosperity, may be assured.

Economic position of the country.

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